

PUYOK, Arnold

Arnold received his undergraduate degree in mass communication (majoring in broadcasting and journalism) from the Universiti Putra Malaysia and currently finishing his Master's degree in Philosophy and Civilisation Studies from the same university. He is also a doctorate student in Malaysian and Regional Politics at the Faculty of Social Sciences, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak with a research entitled "The Political Change of the Kadazandusuns in Sabah, East Malaysia, 1981-2003". He writes a number of research articles in the areas of ethnic politics, electoral politics, and globalisation and its impacts on rural communities. His current publication is "The 2004 Ba' Kelalan By-Election in Sarawak, East Malaysia: the Lunbawang Factor and Whither Representative Democracy in Malaysia" (Journal of Contemporary Southeast Asia, forthcoming). He teaches Malaysian Studies and 20th Century World History to both pre-university and undergraduate students at Curtin University of Technology, Sarawak Campus, Malaysia.

ALWI, Azlin

Azlin Alwi received both her undergraduate and masters degrees in clinical psychology from the International Islamic University, in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Her research interests include the psychological development of the youth, the impact of modernisation on rural communities, and educational and psychological issues affecting rural youth. She teaches Moral Studies at Curtin University of Technology, Sarawak Campus, Malaysia. She is presenting a paper with Arnold Puyok, Lokanathan M. S. Manikam and Winnifred Winston Manggi.

MANIKAM, Lokanathan M.S.

Lokanathan received his bachelors degree in biology and zoology from the University of Banglore, India. His research interests include health issues affecting rural communities, traditional medicines and their use within rural communities. He is currently preparing a paper entitled "From Traditional Healing to Modern Medicine: a Study of the Kayan/Kenyah's Consciousness of Health and Healthy Lifestyle". He teaches human biology and runs a biology lab at Curtin University. He is presenting a paper with Arnold Puyok, Azlin Alwai and Winnifred Winston Manggi.

MANGGI, Winnifred Winston

Winnifred received her bachelors degree in TESL (Teaching English as the Second Language) from the University of Kent, UK. Her research interests include the use of English language among the rural students and its impacts on indigenous languages in Miri, Sarawak. She teaches critical thinking skills, effective communication skills and English to both pre-university and degree students.

Arnold PUYOK, Azlin Hj. ALWI, Lokanathan M. S. MANIKAM, Winnifred Winston MANGGI

Curtin University
Malaysia

Social Transformation and Modernisation Among the Indigenous People: The Case of the Orang Ulu in Miri Sarawak, East Malaysia

This paper aims at examining how and why the processes of social transformation and modernisation take place among the Orang Ulu and how they respond to various elements (internal and external influences) that come along with the two processes. During the past

decades, the Orang Ulu have gone through tremendous changes in various aspects of their lives. The Orang Ulu are no longer being identified as primitive and animistic people. Now, they have been widely recognised as affluent and modern-looking people. Most of the Orang Ulu are no longer practicing their traditional lifestyle let alone observing their old customs and beliefs except for perhaps the Orang Ulu in the remote areas. To a certain extent, these social transformation and modernisation have helped the Orang Ulu to stand on par with other communities across the country and also augurs well for the government's effort in providing equitable economic growth and modernisation to all ethnic groups notwithstanding cultural and religious differences. Malaysia's rapid modernisation, achieved in the early 1980s and continued until the late 1990s, has benefited the Orang Ulu in various aspects. However, to another extent, these social transformation and modernisation, have also contributed to the gradual erosion of indigenous culture and knowledge. Apart from examining the processes of social transformation and modernisation among the Orang Ulu, this paper also discusses the extent to which social transformation and modernisation affect the Orang Ulu's socio-economic and political aspects. Having briefly discussed the above, this paper attempts to address a number of crucial issues with regard to the Orang Ulu's social transformation and modernisation: i. How do the processes of social transformation and modernisation take place among the Orang Ulu? ii. Why do these two processes happen? iii. What are the elements (internal and external influences) involved in these two processes? iv. How do the Orang Ulu respond to these two processes? v. Are their responses positive or negative and what could be the reasons for them to give such responses? vi. Are there any resistances? Why? Finally, what are the obvious impacts of these two processes to the Orang Ulu's socio-economic and political aspects?

We would like to present two papers at the conference. The first paper will be presented by Mr. Lokanathan M. S. Manikam. He will be talking about the social transformation and modernisation among the Kelabits in Miri, Sarawak, Malaysia. The second paper will be presented by Mrs. Winnifred Winston Maggi and her paper will focus on the social transformation and modernisation among the Kayans in Miri, Sarawak, Malaysia. Both papers share similar theoretical and conceptual frameworks except for the data and analysis.